



## Peace Officers and the Rule of Law

Have you ever wondered what would happen if there were no government whatsoever, including no police? Would the absence of government allow for greater freedom? Or would it instead have the opposite effect? In fact, could a state of no government — anarchy — even exist for very long before a new government arose?



James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution, imagined a hypothetical situation. “If men were angels, no government would be necessary,” he wrote in *The Federalist*. And he added, “If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.”

Of course, Madison was well aware that men are not angels and that angels do not govern men, as were the other Founding Fathers who gave us the U.S. Constitution, the supreme law of our land. They knew that without law there could be no freedom. Human nature being what it is, the elimination of the rule of law would result in the rule of the jungle and the loss of freedom. They also understood the importance of controlling government, so it does not end up destroying the very freedom it’s supposed to protect.

One of the ways to control government is to divide power — so that it is not all in one pot. Another way is to keep government as close to the people as possible, with the national government given only those powers — for example, national defense — that could not be effectively handled at the local level. Our constitutional system is based on such principles, and in our system, police powers are a local responsibility.

From the standpoint of preserving freedom, this makes perfect sense. The police perform a vital function, protecting us from the lawless element, and they should be as close as possible to the communities they are entrusted to protect and serve.

Yet, as well all know, some — not just street protesters but powerful voices in the media and government — do not portray the local police this way. Instead, they vilify them as racist brutes. Moreover, rioters have seized upon the accusations to “justify” violence and destruction. And in the name of “justice,” war has been declared on police. That war has included outright assassination.

What is the solution being offered to remedy the alleged police abuse? It is to turn our constitutional system on its head by centralizing police powers in Washington. But common sense and human experience should tell us that this “solution” would ramp up the abuse of power. How could it be otherwise when the police power is consolidated in one pot, and when police are beholden to distant Washington, D.C., rather than to the local communities where they live and work?

If you smell a rat, you are not alone. In the pages that follow, we shed light on the war on police, which



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is a war not only on the police themselves but on the rule of law and the very fabric of our society. Our police provide a vital line of defense between our homes and families, and the vile elements of society that would do us harm.

Do we claim no policeman has ever abused his position? Of course not! But we do make clear that whatever genuine police brutality does exist is being greatly exaggerated to bring about a gigantic transfer of power on the way to nationalizing police. And this power grab, we show, is being advanced not only by street radicals but by powerful interests who support them.



If such a scheme sounds too fantastic to be true, we ask that you evaluate the evidence assembled in our [“Police Under Fire” special report](#) — and then decide if we are right or wrong. We also encourage everyone who values the rule of law to “Support Your Local Police — and Keep Them Independent!”

*A version of the above column appears as the letter from the editor in The New American’s “Police Under Fire” special report. (Click on the image to download a PDF of the report.)*



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